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ABSTRACT

In determining the feasibility of a year-round school program, administrators should judge its potential for facilities utilization, relief of overcrowding, personnel utilization, curriculum improvement, and better learning opportunities -- especially for the slow and fast learners. To determine the potential of a year-round school, a Steering Committee should be appointed by the superintendent. Meeting regularly, five to seven members representative of the school district should serve on this committee to (1) act as a clearinghouse on information relative to year-round school programs and (2) be responsible for assisting in the coordination of the efforts of the subcommittees: general administrative, curriculum, finance and legal, public relations, and transportation. An extensive bibliography provides information about sources of additional material on year-round schools. (Author/DN)

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THE ABC'S OF STUDYING THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING A YEAR ROUND SCHOOL PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

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THE ABC'S OF STUDYING THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING A YEAR ROUND SCHOOL PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

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In our country today many school districts are studying the possibility of expanding the school year.

It seems the basic concept of the year round school program is to operate both elementary and secondary schools on a twelve-month basis, offering full instructional programs at all times, instead of running on nine-month schedules with limited summer sessions.

In many school districts, the traditional nine-month, 180-day plan is being questioned and discarded for a newer approach. The literature of the professional journals often headline the fact that over 400 school systems in our country are already experimenting with year round school programs.

Since the evidence as to the real, long-lasting value of a year round school program is somewhat inconclusive, this short article is written only to suggest some necessary steps in order to determine the feasibility of implementing such a program so as to allow each school district to draw their own conclusions.

In determining the feasibility of a year round school program, the school superintendent, together with the board of education, should address themselves to at least four questions:

1. Will there be a greater utilization of the existing facilities?

2. Will it provide a relief of the over-crowded conditions in the schools?
3. Can we make maximum use of administrative, supervisory, and other twelve-month personnel?
4. Will the year round school program provide for improved curriculum for better learning opportunities, especially for the slow and fast learners?

To answer the above questions and to get the study underway, A Steering Committee should be appointed by the superintendent with the "advice and consent" of the board of education. Meeting regularly, five to [illegible]embers representative of the school district can serve on this all-important committee to: (1) act as a clearing house on information relative to year round school programs, and (2) be responsible to assist in coordinating the efforts of the following five sub-committees:

General Administrative Committee
Curriculum Committee
Finance and Legal Committee
Public Relations Committee
Transportation Committee

Reporting periodically to the Steering Committee, the sub-committees each with a membership between five to seven representatives of the school district, must assume their roles and duties as briefly discussed in the following paragraphs:

The General Administration Committee. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to analyze and report to the Steering Committee about the various year round school programs currently in operation, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to offer some implications for the school district. Included in this report should be factors concerning the utilization of buildings and grounds, food services, plant maintenance and operation, and other items pertaining to general administration.

The Curriculum Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the membership of this appointed committee to report to the Steering Committee those implications for the school district that involve the local transportation system and to determine if they are feasible for the school system.

The Finance and Legal Committee. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to report their findings to the Steering Committee that involve the most financially feasible program for the district. In addition, this committee shall investigate all the legal problems and implications relative to a year round school program.

The Public Relations Committee. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to obtain information from the Steering Committee in order to keep the school district informed on the progress of the feasibility study. This will be done through authorized news releases, radio and/or television announcements, and through service and/or civic club meetings.

The Transportation Committee. It shall be the responsibility to study the methods of transportation of various year round plans, the local transportation system, and to determine the plans most feasible for the local system.

If the study is to be meaningful and worthwhile, the members of the Steering Committee, with the assistance from the five sub-committees, must be able to honestly answer the following questions:

1. Are the school buildings fully equipped and ready to use on a year round basis?
2. Does the overhead costs of administration continue to be the same whether the schools are open or closed during the summer months?
3. Are fixed charges, such as insurance, interest, and capital outlay costs remaining fairly constant whether the schools are in operation or shut down?
4. Can new construction of school buildings be delayed or avoided?

Since the writer has served as consultant to a feasibility study of the year round school program, he recommends information be shared with the Steering Committee and its sub-committees. Such information can be found in:

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